

A small plane whose pilot either passed out or died flew in circles for several hours before running out of fuel and spiraling into the Gulf of Mexico Thursday afternoon as F-15s circled above.

The Cessna 421 is in the water about 120 miles west of Tampa, Fla., and is completely submerged, the U.S. Coast Guard said. The plane made a soft landing and was fully intact before sinking.

It is unclear how many people were on board the aircraft and a MH 60 helicopter is en route to the location with rescue swimmers.

Earlier, it was believed the pilot was the only one aboard the Cessna 421, which was en route from Louisiana to Brandon, Fla. His identity was not immediately known. But Bill Huete, a mechanic who has worked in the past on the downed aircraft at Slidell Airport, identified him as Dr. Peter Hertzak, an OB-GYN who worked in the Slidell community just northeast of New Orleans.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/04/19/f-15s-follow-small-plane-off-florida-after-pilot-becomes-unresponsive/#ixzz1sWfuVtMR>